

E 415

.9

.F85 I6

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00005023634









In Memoriam

---

Ezra Bartlett French



WASHINGTON CITY  
THE GLOBE  
1886

E415

.9

.F85I6

535753

F21, 38

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH - - - - - C. C. SNOW.

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY SECOND AUDITOR'S OFFICE.

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY U. S. TREASURY DEPARTMENT.

REMINISCENCES - - - - - A. J. FAUST, Ph. D.

SERMON - - - - - Rev. J. E. RANKIN, D. D.

POEM - - - - - Mrs. A. L. R. DUFOUR.





## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

---

THE story of a well-spent life is its own apology for the recital. It is at once grateful to the old, in the assurance that their trials are not in vain; and instructive to the young, in the evidence that existence is not without high and sacred purposes. May the few incidents of a noble career, here narrated, embody welcome memories to those who had the good fortune to know their subject, and useful lessons to those who wish to learn, from exalted examples, how to live exalted lives.

EZRA BARTLETT FRENCH was born at Landaff, New Hampshire, on the 23d of September, 1810, and if ever the qualities of mind and body were the transmitted wealth of successive generations, the sturdy New England physique and Puritan virtues came to him by natural inheritance. He was the fifth in direct descent from Edward French, one of the pioneer settlers of Ipswich, Mass., in 1636, who, four years later, removed to Salisbury, where he died in 1674. The son and grandson of this veteran subduer of the wilderness, each named Samuel, and Moses, the third in descent, lived, like their progenitor, to a good old age, leaving the heritage of their virtues to a numerous progeny. One of the sons of Moses French, named John, born in 1780, we find practising medicine in Bath, New Hampshire, in early manhood, and here he remained for nearly half a century, acquiring a reputation as one of the ablest physicians of the Granite State. He subsequently removed to Beloit, Wisconsin, where he died on the

Christmas of 1876, in his ninety-fourth year, honored and lamented for his talents and his virtues, and with the satisfaction of having seen one of his sons elevated to one of the nation's highest positions of trust, and occupying it with exceptional dignity and ability. Of seven children born to him, EZRA BARTLETT FRENCH was the eldest.

After enjoying in the schools of his native State the advantages of an academic course of instruction, young Ezra elected to enter the legal profession, and began the study of law with the firm of Smith & Payson, at Bath, New Hampshire. He subsequently pursued his course under the able direction of Joseph Bell, one of the most eminent lawyers of the State. But the temptation to "go West" was even then quite strong in the minds of young New Englanders, and in 1832 we find him located at Buffalo, New York, mastering his profession in association with Judge Love, who afterwards became eminent as the energetic partner of Millard Fillmore, and of Mr. Lord, who subsequently exchanged the bar for the pulpit, and is famous in Western New York as one of the most powerful preachers of his time. Under such influences the talents of young French would doubtless have developed into a forensic power that would have placed him high on the roll of honor in the Empire State; but he found the climate telling on his constitution, and after a year or two returned once more to the air of his native hills. At this time, the old "District of Maine," recently become a State, was exhibiting all the signs of a vigorous future growth; its shipping and timber interests were developing, and its seaboard towns rapidly filling with an active and enterprising population. So the young barrister in search of a world to conquer, disappointed of his Western hopes, determined to try his fortune Eastward, and about 1833 went to Portland, where he spent some time in the further study and practice of his profession in the office of Smith & Bradford, well-known lawyers of that city.

Two years later he removed to the town of Waldoboro', where he for a short time edited the "*Lincoln Patriot*," and then to Nobleboro', since called Damariscotta, where he finally settled down to the practice of his profession; and this place remained his residence till he was called to the National Capital in 1861. As his earnest devotion to duty and thoroughness in accomplishing the work in hand might foreshadow, he soon took rank among the men of recognized ability of the bar of Southeastern Maine.

With a nature inclined to strong, decided, and conscientious convictions, and prone to enthusiastic support of whatever he believed to be right, it was impossible for Mr. French to keep aloof from the public discussions of the day, and he soon became actively engaged in politics, as an earnest advocate of the measures of the Democratic party, which he believed to represent the true interests of the country. His abilities were soon recognized; young as he was, he became a power in the portion of the State where he resided, and in 1838, when but twenty-eight years of age, and before he had resided five years in the district, he was elected to the State Legislature.

His strong sense of right was already beginning to chafe at the course of the party he had espoused, and when, in 1842, he was sent to the State Senate, he soon gave evidence that he was not to be counted among the servile partisans who were willing to sacrifice human liberty on Southern altars; and in 1845, when Benton's proposition to limit the area of slavery by a meridian line through Central Texas came under discussion, he took firm ground in its favor; his bold and vigorous denunciation of the slave power drawing upon him the wrathful vindictiveness of the ultra portion of his party.

At this point we may be pardoned for stepping aside from his public career to touch upon an incident vitally connected with the happiness of Mr. French's after life.

It was while he was a member of the House, that he stepped one day into a church at Damariscotta, which the ladies of the village were decorating for a religious festival, under the superintendence of a committee of which he was a member. The young legislator's eye, while watching the progress of the work of transformation under the busy hands of the fair laborers, found peculiar interest in noting the graceful and modest bearing of one of the busiest and fairest of the throng. The object of his attention, all unconscious that one so near had found

——— "a bright particular star,  
And sought to call it"—his,

went on with her tasteful handiwork; but the shaft had sped. Mr. French sought an introduction, and wooed and won the faithful companion, with whom, for thirty-eight years he shared the blessings of a domestic life, brightened by the constant endeavor of each to increase and perpetuate the happiness of the other, and heightened in its enjoyment by a consonance of tastes and sentiments, and a correspondence of character, rarely observable even in happy households.

Miss Bethiah K. Hilton was a descendant of Governor Bradford, of Plymouth Colony, and was, at the time Mr. French met her, residing at Damariscotta. They were married in January, 1842, just before Mr. French entered the State Senate.

After his service in the two branches of the legislature, Mr. French was chosen, in 1845, to the important office of Secretary of State, which he held for five years by annual re-election. Under the governor's appointment, he served also for some time as Bank Commissioner, proving himself, as usual, an efficient and valuable servant of the commonwealth.

While in the legislature, and especially as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, his efforts were mainly directed to measures for advancing great public interests, rather than party ends. The humanitarian was stronger in him than the politi-

cian; a circumstance that doubtless caused his ability to be sometimes under-estimated by those who measure the greatness of the legislator by the truculence of his political pugnacity. To mistake the partisan for the statesman is no uncommon error in our countrymen.

Thus, Mr. French's course shows a warm interest in measures for the restriction of abuses, prison reform, the discouragement of intemperance, the establishment of schools and diffusion of education, rather than in mere questions of party advantage. His turn of mind was judicial rather than forensic, and it was only when some principle was at stake that he cared to come to the front; and if the result was consonant with his convictions he took little interest in mere disputation. It was easy to foresee his course in the new aspect of public affairs.

The front of national parties was now changing; vital questions of principle were replacing such topics of policy as national bank, tariff, and sub-treasury; the Democratic organization was diseased with the leprosy of slavery; and it accorded neither with Mr. French's sterling patriotism, his acute sense of justice, nor his sensitive humanity, to remain in affiliation with that party after it had deserted its traditions, and become a new engine for extending the area of slavery, catching run-aways and plotting the destruction of the republic. Early and warmly, therefore, he espoused the cause of liberty and union, and the party that represented it. In the "*American Sentinel*," of which he was editor, the free-soil doctrine was strongly advocated; and when, in 1855, the Hon. Lot M. Morrill, R. D. Rice, and others undertook the organization of the free-soil sentiment, Mr. French aided these compatriots in giving formal expression to an embodiment of principles so outspoken in character that it was adopted the following year by the nascent Republican party, into which the free-soil movement merged, as the platform for the campaign.

The voters of Mr. French's district were also moving in the direction of liberty and progress; and in 1858 they testified their appreciation of his efforts in behalf of freedom by choosing him to represent them in the Thirty-sixth Congress. Here, as usual, he made his mark, as a working member of the Committee on Manufactures, and more especially as the New England member of the Committee on the Pacific Railroad; strongly advocating the construction of the Central Pacific, which he considered the only practicable plan, not only as a bond of union between the States, but as a necessity of the age and country. And in the great contest then going on in the House, associated with such men as Thaddeus Stevens, Henry Winter Davis, Washburne, and Bingham, he stood manfully by the cause he had espoused. In particular, he was the personal and political friend of the lamented Cilley, supporting him steadfastly throughout his course, though he could not approve the weakness that led to the young patriot's murder at the hands of Graves. At this day we have little conception of the task set before the champions of freedom in the days when men like Keitt, Cobb, Toombs, and Vallandigham, ruled the floor. There were occasions when such herculean frames as that of Mr. French were more efficient than rhetoric to stop the lawless conduct of the ruffian legislators.

The campaign of 1860 arrived, and Mr. French entered heart and soul into the canvass. He had the satisfaction of materially assisting in the election of President Lincoln, and of seeing that great party, which, as an active organizer in his adopted State, he had done so much to form and prosper, come into power with a strength that foreshadowed the overthrow of armed treason and its ally, slavery.

And thus it was natural, that when the new President was looking for trustworthy men to fill the responsible positions lately vacated by men inimical to the Union, he should not overlook the talents or the services of a man like Mr. French;

to whom the tender of office of Second Auditor was a graceful acknowledgment of national obligation and personal esteem. In February, 1861, Mr. French went to Washington, appointed by Governor Washburne, of Maine, as a representative at the "Peace Conference" then held, and of which he proved himself an active and efficient member, in co-operation with men like Fessenden, Boutwell, Frelinghuysen, and Reverdy Johnson. The inauguration followed, and in the subsequent September Mr. French became Second Auditor of the Treasury.

The position was no sinecure, though prior to the rebellion the work of this bureau was far less than is that of one of its sub-divisions now, and had never been regarded as involving very arduous responsibilities.

But, though it was easy to foresee that this bureau, which, when Mr. French took charge of it, was one of the smallest in the departments, carrying on its roll a clerical force of but seventeen, would, under pressure of the war, greatly enlarge its operations, no one appears to have anticipated the gigantic proportions to which it would swell, or the rapidity of its growth. The public incredulity concerning the probable duration of the war, and the general ignorance of many things that result from a state of long continued hostilities on a large scale, sufficiently account for this. In this incredulity and ignorance Congress fully shared; and one of Mr. French's chief tasks lay in the necessity and difficulty of bringing that body to an adequate sense of the situation. The office, as constituted in 1817, and as it still substantially exists, has the duty of receiving, examining, settling and finally filing for future reference, all accounts of army paymasters, of the pay and bounty of soldiers, and accounts relating to Indian affairs, besides a variety of miscellaneous accounts connected with army business. It also settles all claims pertaining to these branches of public service. In piping times of peace the work was not very onerous, though, as said above, it was no sinecure;

but the immense operations of the Government in time of war made the duties of the office laborious, perplexing, and harassing in the extreme. The numerous laws passed from 1861 to 1869 in regard to pay and bounty; the myriad of accidents during the contest, rendering records imperfect, or often destroying them altogether; the inexperience of many officers, and the ignorance of many others, as to the proper forms or essential requirements of vouchers; the thousand varying regulations of the vast recruiting service; the necessity for expeditious settlement of accounts and claims, in order to do justice to an army of deserving applicants; the numerous frauds attempted by forgery, by false personation, by perjury, by unworthy agents, or by direct robbery; these are a few only of the circumstances that made the conduct of the Second Auditor's office peculiarly difficult and responsible. Another circumstance added largely to the Auditor's perplexities: Congress, as before intimated, was very slow in rising to a true comprehension of the situation; and while the public debt was being swollen by hundreds of millions to enable military operations to succeed, that body was chary of appropriations for what seemed a merely civil purpose. The consequence was that tons upon tons of miscellaneous documents accumulated on the floors of the office, while there was not one-fourth of the force at work that was needed to examine them. It was not, in fact, till three years after the war closed that the Auditor was allowed a sufficient number of men to do the required work properly; nor was it till 1870 that the mass of material had been reduced to an amount that foreshadowed the completion of the task. It may easily be imagined that all this time there was an intense strain upon the chief of the bureau, who was not only harassed by the administrative details of an office employing, when at its maximum of force in 1868, four hundred and seventy-eight persons, but was pressed on every side by Congressmen, officers, and claimants innumerable, each



desiring that the case in which he was interested should receive immediate attention; while in the application of laws passed in haste or to meet special exigencies a multitude of legal points arose to which he was expected to furnish instant and equitable decisions. It is said by some who were in the office during the later period of the war that Mr. French often worked sixteen hours a day, and sometimes was compelled to make his signature hour after hour till thoroughly exhausted.

An approximate idea of the work accomplished during the first nine years of incumbency may be drawn from his official report for 1870, where it is shown, that while, during the forty-four years prior to the rebellion, there were 78,559 settlements of accounts and claims, there had been, during the nine years from 1861 to 1870, the astounding number of 917,516 such settlements, being twelve times as many during these nine years as during the previous forty-four!

The disbursements thus audited amount to more than two thousand millions of dollars, and the accumulated documents reach three hundred tons in weight; yet every dollar involved has been equitably adjusted, and not one document of the many millions has been lost. In fact, in such order have the papers been kept that any one required may be found in five minutes time. Surely, if ever a public officer might congratulate himself on the satisfactory performance of an arduous duty, or ever richly deserved public appreciation of his faithful and successful service, Mr. French was that officer.

But this long-continued anxiety and labor at last told on a constitution naturally vigorous and elastic. Mr. French had for a long time been troubled with an asthmatic affection, but had effectually subdued it, and in every other respect appeared hale and hearty. The sedentary habits engendered by official routine of such severe nature as he had undergone gradually produced disorders of the digestive organs and rendered him a prey to dyspepsia.

During the last ten years of his life, the great bulk of the war business having been dispatched, the duties of the office became gradually less burdensome; and it is pleasant to reflect, that though his position was still one of large responsibility and care, yet he was enabled to live with comparative freedom from anxiety, and to indulge, notwithstanding the inroads of an insidious malady, in those intellectual recreations which his cultivated mind and comprehensive nature fitted him to enjoy.

Fond of music and the belles-lettres, he was a constant attendant at the concert-room and at the literary clubs of the capital, of several of which he was a member. He was a fine reader, and often exercised his faculty to entertain his friends. He was enthusiastically fond of a good picture, and if wealth proportioned to his taste had been at his command, he would have had a gallery second to none in America. He was fond of poetry, especially of such as portrays with a generous sympathy the noble deeds or pitiable weaknesses of human nature. Robert Burns, for this reason, was his favorite author; he never tired of reading or hearing the life-inspired lines of that most human and humane of bards. In his intercourse with his subordinates, Mr. French combined the dignity of the true gentleman with an affability that invited confidence and attracted esteem. Of a nature open, generous and considerate, he became the friend and confidant of those under his charge, assisting them in misfortune, and rejoicing in their success. But he was himself so conscientious in the discharge of duty that neglect of the public service received no indulgence at his hands; and in the gradual reduction of his force, he took care, so far as was left to him to do it, that the faithful and competent should be retained rather than others who might be supported by powerful influence. This course secured him an amount of respect with the administration enjoyed by few other officials. His recommendation was usually sufficient endorsement for any desired

change in the status of his office. In religious matters Mr. French was independent in opinion, and while he professed his belief in the main doctrines of Christianity, and regularly attended service at the Congregational Church, where, at his decease, he was president of the society, he was repugnant to extreme views, which he thought trenched on the exercise of that Divine charity which he believed to form the basis of the dealings of Providence with men. This, perhaps, resulted from his own benevolent nature, for he was always foremost in works of good-will to his fellows. This had led him in early life to become a member of the Masonic fraternity, and of the order of Odd Fellows, in both of which societies he rose to high positions of trust and honor. A Royal Arch Chapter at Damariscotta bears his name.

No one ever knew him to refuse his aid to any person or purpose worthy of assistance when appealed to. His salary was moderate, in fact, utterly inadequate to his service or deserts; but his heart knew no touch of illiberality.

The last ten years of his life were passed in the satisfaction of having accomplished a great work, and were so free from the cares that had hitherto beset his path, and so full of evidences of the confidence of his fellow-citizens and of the attachment of his friends, that they formed, perhaps, the happiest period of his life; and all who knew him judged from his hale and hearty appearance, his cheerful and buoyant spirits, that he would probably outlive the century. But the destroyer was insidiously at work, and had obtained too firm a hold on his constitution to be shaken off. In his devotion to public duty he had given twenty years of his life as a sacrifice to his country.

It was Mr. French's custom to spend his summer vacations at the spots in his native and adopted States that he had learned to love in earlier days, and he usually returned to his official duties strengthened and invigorated by the bracing air of the

Northern hills. And thus, in August, 1879, he returned to the old haunts, in the hope that he might remedy the torpid action of the liver, which had for some time been troubling him. Though he had lost his old robustness under the wearing cares of public duty, his health was still apparently so good as to give his friends no anxiety, and it was hoped that a few weeks' sojourn in New England would return him to his Washington circle renewed in strength and spirits. But the silver cord was loosened; and when he came back, after a prolonged absence, his condition was such as to excite apprehension for the worst. Nevertheless, his symptoms gradually improved under skilful treatment, till all were encouraged to hope for his speedy restoration; when, on the morning of the day preceding his death, while amusing himself feeding his mocking-bird, of which he was very fond, he was seized with a fainting fit. This was quickly followed by another, and he passed into a semi-conscious condition till evening. Then he rallied, and after conversing with friends at his bedside, sank into a quiet and peaceful slumber, in which his regular and easy breathing gave no sign of the approaching end. At four o'clock in the morning it was noticed that the breathing became gradually fainter and more long-drawn, and the sleep of the body passed into the rest that knows no waking.

Thus died, calmly and peacefully, as an infant sinks to slumber, on Saturday, April 24, 1880, after three-score and ten busy years, this exemplar of a useful, honored, and stainless life. It was fitting that the close of a career, directed always without faltering towards the highest object, and always at peace with God and his fellow-men, should be thus serene and placid, passing by a painless and almost imperceptible waning into another and higher existence.

The tidings of his death spread quickly, and came with a sudden shock to a thousand hearts, for his friends had been led to think he would soon be among them once more. The em-

ployees of his office, universally filled with profound sorrow for the loss of their honored chief, assembled to give formal expression to their feelings, and the chiefs of the various bureaus of the Treasury Department met and passed strong resolutions of regard. The funeral ceremonies at the Congregational Church, conducted by Dr. J. E. Rankin, whose elegiac discourse drew general commendation for its faithful delineation of Mr. French's character, were very solemn and impressive, and nothing but the desire of the bereaved companion of his life prevented his receiving the honors of a great public funeral. In solemn procession, the members of the clerical force so lately under his charge accompanied his remains to the train that took them northward to his old home at Damariscotta, where they received the last tributes of respect from the friends and comrades of many years.

A deputation of his brother masons met the remains on their arrival at the village, and escorted them to Lincoln Hall, over which the stars and stripes floated at half mast. For three hours the people of the town poured through the hall where the body lay in state, and tender and loving hands graced the casket with the flowers he loved so well in life; and the next morning an imposing procession, which included the Royal Arch Chapter that bears his name, lodges of masons, not only of Damariscotta, but from Wiscasset, where, in 1850, he first became a member of the order; from Waldoboro, Bristol, Boothbay, and other neighboring towns, bore him with sad and solemn dirges to his last resting place in the village cemetery. Here the Rev. C. V. Hanson, of the Baptist Church, conducted the services, and the remains were then consigned to their turfy bed amid the impressive ceremonies of that ancient order of which he had been a shining light for thirty years.

And thus, amid the tears of sorrowing friends, closed his earthly career. Care and responsibility, anxiety and labor, disease and death, have done their worst, and left to us nothing but sad yet pleasing memories of estimable traits and noble actions.

Personally, Mr. French was a man that, placed at random among a thousand, would have drawn instant remark. Over six feet in height, with weight and frame proportioned to his altitude, his splendid physique and upright carriage, no less than his open, expressive countenance, and firm but elastic step, stamped him at once as no ordinary man. Nor was the mind within disproportioned to the frame without. While making no pretention to a reputation for learning, he was an extensive reader, and his well-stored intellect explored wide fields of investigation in almost every branch of useful knowledge. Socially, he was most hearty in welcome, most affable in approach, most companionable in intercourse; he knew how to combine dignity with ease, and gentleness with strength.

Mr. French was the last of the chiefs of bureaus appointed by President Lincoln in the early days of the war. For eighteen years he held his place, one of marked trust and responsibility, mainly by reason of three characteristics that furnish the key to his success in public life: his constant willingness to sacrifice his private welfare to the public good; his unremitting attention to the duties of his high trust; and not least, to the utter purity of his character, both as private citizen and public servant. Amid the clouds of personal and political scandals that have somewhat darkened the history of our times, no spot has been found to tarnish his fair fame, and animosity has failed to cast a shadow on his integrity or his honor. Placed in charge of an office requiring the clearest head, the best administrative capacity, and the severest incorruptibility to manage its colossal operations, he completely filled its requirements, and it is doubtful if the history of the world shows an equal instance of such able conduct of so vast an accounting bureau, auditing two thousand millions of dollars with correctness and precision, and with justice alike to Government and individuals.

The resolutions passed by the clerical force under his charge showed with what peculiar affection he was regarded by those

near to him in official life; nor can there be a higher tribute to the qualities that adorn his character than this spontaneous evidence that he was able, during so long a period filled with various vicissitudes, to inspire in the hearts of his subordinates not respect alone, but reverence, esteem, and affection.

And so his life, devoted to high and noble interests, is "rounded with a sleep." How that tall, majestic form, that countenance expressing at once benignity and firmness, that manner so sunny and genial, that intellect so stored with thought, that great heart so full of tenderness, will be missed in the circles so lately graced with by stately presence! What scores of gifted minds will lament the absence of his cultured taste, his varied reading, his active co-operation in whatever was good or elevating! What charity will not mourn the loss of that open hand and ready sympathy!

But in that narrower circle of those honored with closer intimacy, what a pall has fallen on every heart! What a shadow, like that of the dark valley itself, pervades the social group to which the sunshine of his presence gave light and warmth and pleasure! To her who for so many years has been the loved companion of such noble manhood, words that offer solace seem presumption; but she will know without telling what sympathy goes out to her from the many who have learned to prize the gentle and loving nature that has so long been the light and life of so much excellence and virtue.

Let us thank Heaven that lives like his leave behind them memories that brighten the existence of those that mourn; while the noble example of such a career, successful by the very simplicity of its manly virtue, becomes a beacon to light the way of future souls to lives of similar nobility, purity, and truth.





## PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

### MEETING AT THE SECOND AUDITOR'S OFFICE.

---

A meeting of the officers and clerks of the Second Auditor's Office was held in the Auditor's room, Winder Building, on the 24th of April, 1880, to take action in regard to the death of their chief officer, the Hon. EZRA BARTLETT FRENCH, which had occurred at four o'clock on the morning of that day.

At 2:30 P. M. the meeting was called to order by Mr. H. C. Harmon, Deputy Auditor, who, in taking the chair, referred in feeling and appropriate terms to the loss sustained by the general public and by themselves individually, to the intimate relations sustained for many years by the deceased to many of those present, and to the fitness of some formal expression of the sentiments of his late subordinates, in token of their regard for the memory of one who had been not less the object of their personal esteem than of their official respect.

In conclusion, Mr. Harmon proposed that the heads of divisions select a committee to draw up proper resolutions for the occasion; and on motion of Mr. H. A. Whallon, Chief of the Pay and Bounty Division, Messrs. Farish, Patch, Faust, and Snow were appointed to that duty, and Mr. George W. Walter was chosen Secretary.

While the committee were preparing the resolutions, Mr. Horace L. Piper, of Maine, made the following remarks:

MR. CHAIRMAN: If there are any persons present qualified to speak of the deceased Auditor without bias, I think I am one of them. I have never had any claim to be called a favorite. My relations to Mr. French were far more official than personal.

It has become a maxim to say nothing but good of the dead. We need no such rule of speech to-day. Of our departed chief we may freely say the whole truth; it will be all good.

Socially he was genial in manners, interesting in conversation, full of learning and of wisdom. The gentler side of human nature was illustrated in every day of his life.

I never knew charity to appeal in vain to him. Nothing did he "to be seen of men." And while his charity bore the true stamp, its liberality verged close upon a fault; so that we might almost say of him as Goldsmith says of a very worthy character:

"Careless their merits or their faults to scan,  
His pity gave ere charity began."

"To be honest, as this world goes," says the greatest of modern poets, "is to be one man picked out of ten thousand." Such a man was EZRA B. FRENCH. I know his character. I know it from the day he was twenty-one years of age. And of my own knowledge, and from all hearsay, I know it to have been "of good report."

Malice could not touch him; detraction could not reach him; the poisoned arrows of slander fell broken and harmless at his feet, because he was girt about with the rugged mail of perfect integrity. He was not only honest; I believe he was absolutely incorruptible.

Officially, he never, in my judgment, intentionally did an injustice. Pretended friends may have deceived him, his judgment may have erred, but his heart was always right. Think of the thousand difficulties which beset his every step, for almost twenty years of official life! I believe he always did what seemed to him right. And I know that no man ever lived who was more ready to rectify an error of judgment.

He was faithful himself, and he demanded the same fidelity of others. Herein, many of us who are here to-day may find a reason for just pride in the fact that we have been retained in our places throughout the numerous changes of so many years.

I do not hesitate to say, without a shadow of qualification, that as an officer Mr. French was true to the Government, true to claimants, and true to his subordinates.

Though we could well have wished him spared yet many years, the ruthless reaper takes whomsoever he will, and we wait only a little longer for our summons to the last account. Already had Mr. French reached his "three score and ten;" and the Psalmist has truly said that even though the years of man be four score, "yet is their strength, labor and sorrow, for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."

A good man has fallen; his example lives. If we follow his footsteps we shall be true men. Much as we sorrow for the dead, we may have no fear. The infinite mysteries of the future have been revealed to no human ken, but whatever it may hold in store for us all, I have no shade of doubt that our departed chief and friend will reap the good man's "recompense of reward."

The committee then reported the following, which was adopted as the expression of the meeting:

"The clerks of the Second Auditor's Office have learned with profound regret the death of their beloved and honored chief, EZRA BARTLETT FRENCH; and while leaving it to his official peers to pronounce in fitting terms the eulogy so justly deserved by his long, able, and upright career as a public officer, they feel that it becomes them to express the sentiments of heartfelt sorrow that fill them on this sad occasion, and to testify their appreciation of departed worth.

"Our late chief was a man whose qualities of head and heart drew at once the respect and affection of all who came in contact with him; and this untoward event deprives us of a friend long known and loved, and whose virtues challenged admiration and regard. Manly, frank, outspoken, sincere and generous in character, his friendship was steady and courageous, and his uniform kindness and courtesy endeared him to our hearts, while his spotless integrity inspired our highest veneration. His hand and heart were ever open to appeals for aid and sympathy. He possessed a mind of superior force and capacity, and his administrative faculties were eminently practical and effective.

"It is not alone, therefore, as a political and official associate that we mourn his loss, but rather as a loved and esteemed friend, whose dignity of bearing, justice of action, goodness of heart, and years of faithful service, no less than his advancing years, taught us to regard him with almost filial reverence and affection.

"And we do further express our heartfelt sympathy with his stricken widow and relatives, trusting that they may have the consolation of that Saviour to whom he looked for strength and guidance here, and also for the 'rest that remaineth to the people of God.'

"And we direct the publication of these expressions of sympathy and respect, and that a copy thereof, duly engrossed, be transmitted to the family of the deceased."

On motion of Mr. H. A. Whallon, Mr. Solomon E. Faunce was chosen to act as marshal at the funeral, which it was resolved to attend in a body.

On motion, the meeting, at 2:55 P. M., adjourned *sine die*.

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED AT THE MEETING OF THE HEADS OF  
BUREAUS OF THE UNITED STATES TREASURY.

---

The Committee appointed to draft resolutions in behalf of the officers of the Treasury Department upon the death of the Hon. E. B. FRENCH, late Second Auditor, beg leave to submit the following:

Whereas death has again been in our midst and taken from us the Hon. EZRA B. FRENCH, who for nearly nineteen years has been a prominent officer of this Department, therefore

*Resolved*, That we, his associates, desire to express and place upon record, not as a customary formality, but as an expression of sincere feeling, our full appreciation of the marked intelligence, the sterling worth, the integrity of purpose, and of those gentle and manly qualities which made him beloved by all with whom he was associated.

*Resolved*, That we tender to his family our heartfelt sympathy in this their great affliction.

*Resolved*, That as a mark of respect to his memory we will, in a body, attend his funeral.

*Resolved*, That a copy of these resolutions be transmitted to his family, and published in the local papers, and also inscribed upon the books of the Department.

Committee :	{	J. K. UPTON,
		<i>Assistant Secretary.</i>
		JOHN J. KNOX,
		<i>Comptroller of the Currency.</i>
		A. G. PORTER,
		<i>First Comptroller.</i>

APRIL 24, 1880.

## REMINISCENCES.

---

### *HAUD IMMÉMOR.*

---

“Most men, when drawn to speak about themselves,  
Are moved by little and little to say more  
Than they first dream'd; until at last they blush,  
And can but hope to find secret excuse  
In the self-knowledge of their auditors.”

*Walter Scott's Old Play.*

---

“It becomes a man,  
To cherish memory, where he had delight,  
For kindness is the natural birth of kindness.  
Whose soul records not the great debt of joy,  
Is stamped forever an ignoble man.”

*Sophocles: Ajax.*

---

It has been my good fortune to have known, in the close intimacy of social life, two distinguished sons of New England, who were prominent actors in the late civil war. The one, Charles Sumner, in the forensic field of the Senate, occupied a more conspicuous position in the public eye than the other, the late Hon. E. B. FRENCH, Second Auditor of the Treasury, who, in the quieter duties of an accounting officer of the Government, adjusted all the claims of the soldiers engaged in that strife. Each filled an important place, and however unlike their respective spheres, each faithfully discharged his duties during the most critical period of our history. They were both men of mark, and both genuine sons of a Puritan ancestry. Both commanded my respect, but one in an especial manner awakened my love.

Early in 1868, on becoming a frequenter of the various literary clubs of the Capital, I remember well at one of these

gatherings to have first met Mr. French. His noble head and commanding presence so impressed me that among friends I named him the Roman Senator, and the ready acceptance of the term showed how well it applied to him. By the close of the next year we were well acquainted, and I had learned to admire the mind as well as the outward man. No literary gathering seemed complete without him, and many who scarcely knew him save in those occasional meetings will remember the genial brightness which seemed like an atmosphere about him. To those, who saw him in the warmer relations of friendly intercourse, it is almost impossible as yet to speak quite calmly of the blank which he has left. To me he was more than friend—guide, counsellor—and were it not a sacred duty imposed upon me by the wish of others who loved and honored him, my own heart would teach me to cherish his memory in the silence which deep sorrow always brings, but a life like his is too rare to be kept in remembrance only by the few. However feeble the tribute to himself, the influence of such a life belongs to the many.

The antecedents of a man of such individuality of character as Mr. French are not without interest, and there are uses for the lessons which a personal history unfolds to men of high as well as of low degree. It was a favorite saying of Doctor Arnold, head-master of Rugby, who had so much to do in forming the present generation of scholars and statesmen of England, that every life has its lesson. Oftentimes it lies far beneath the surface, and is not easily discerned by the casual observer, but it is there, if one have but the patience and perseverance to seek it beyond the incrustation with which natural temperament or artificial life has overlaid it. If I comprehend Mr. French's life, and if I were to educe from it its key-note, I would characterize it as a life in which the purely personal yielded to that higher quality of which duty is the supreme guide and exponent. To another pen has been as-

signed the task of preparing a biographical account of Mr. French, and I will therefore not entrench upon the subject-matter which properly belongs to his personal history. In the early formative period of life Mr. French is represented as a diligent student, carrying into his academic career that same conscientious attention to details of study which marked him as the eminently painstaking official for so many years. When at the academy, I can readily imagine that he exhibited none of that precocity of intellect which too frequently ends with the early years of life, disappointing friends in their expectations, and transforming the promising youth into the spasmodic, shiftless man. If, however, he showed nothing of the genius, delighting in brilliant paradoxes and *jeux d'esprit*, he demonstrated that he was possessed of the genius of method and system, which, in the long run, produces more substantial results than mere intellectual cleverness, divested, as it often is, of all that is comprehensive, and great, and good. Mr. French was endowed with that gift which renders all mental garniture effective—the gift of methodical and patient work. He comprehended the scope of every undertaking, and he had the courage to carry it on to a legitimate end, despite any of the adverse circumstances which surrounded him. Milton characterizes this quality of mind as the highest philosophy:

“To know  
That which before us lies in daily life  
Is the prime wisdom, what is more, is foam,  
Or emptiness, or fond impertinence.”

The transition from boyhood, its studies and its aspirations, to manhood, with its cares and responsibilities, was gradual. It was no sudden wrenching from early example and pursuit—rather was it the gentle gliding of one distinct period of life into another. The strength and purity of youth were the preludes of that fixedness of principle and that inflexible firmness of purpose, which formed the substratum upon which was reared

the moral edifice of Mr. French's character. Its inherent elements were grounded deep in the soil of early years. No storm however angry, no temptation however seductive, could ever successfully assail the grand structure built upon such a foundation. The ideal of youth, in short, passed into the ideal of manhood without any apparent change. It was the fruition of

"That awful independent on to-morrow,  
Whose yesterdays look backwards with a smile."

Mr. French's personal appearance, to which I have already alluded, was, as it frequently happens, a pretty good index of his character. He was a Colonial type of man, whose large frame and full smooth face recalled Trumbull's pictures of the early fathers of the Republic. The contour of his face was as clearly defined as a well-cut medallion. His eye, keen and brilliant, exemplified the saying of Cicero—" *Oculi, tanquam speculatores, altissimum locum obtinent*"—and was indeed a very sentinel in alertness. His face was stamped with the two chief traits of character which shone in every period of his life: the firmness of mind which enabled him to overcome every obstacle, and the large-hearted charity to see the better side of man, and to appeal to it in forming his estimate of those with whom he was brought in contact. There was a frankness and a straightforwardness of countenance which instinctively led you at once to repose confidence in its possessor. It was indeed the face of one above every sort of finesse and dissimulation, and yet it was not devoid at times of traces of deep struggle and thoughtfulness. When in repose Mr. French's face often showed the peculiar lines which are always indicative of conflict, of one who has known temptation, and who has conquered it.

"A vaincre sans péril on triomphe sans gloire."\*

There are few men whose whole character one can safely include in a single epithet, and yet if I sought brevity in

\* Corneille—*Cid*, II, 2.



mental analysis, I would denominate him, following the definition of Stewart, the genius of common sense, which, with the Scotch metaphysician, means "a temper of mind that views always with coolness and accuracy the various circumstances of situation, and receives due impressions without exaggeration from peculiar habits." A man of whom this can be affirmed is rarely at war with himself; there is no conflict or antagonism between the moral, the intellectual, and the spiritual, but an equipoise of faculties, a certain roundness of the whole being resembling the cloud of the poet:

"Which moveth altogether, if it move at all."

Men of this mould are always safe men. They possess as a mental principle such a conservation of forces that they are never extremists in any cause, for the foundation of their character forbids any attempt at what is impracticable or problematical. Without any ratiocinative process, and perhaps by intuition alone, they learn, to use the striking words of Zschokke, that "the first step toward wisdom and tranquility is to acknowledge the impossible, and second, not to desire it." And yet such characters are not always shaped after a clearly cut pre-Raphaelite type. Mr. French, while eminently practical in all the affairs of life, was to a high degree susceptible to the influences of what is best in literature, in nature, and in art. He loved nature with the passionate devotion of the poet as well as with the scrutinizing eye of the painter. He comprehended the tranquillizing power which resides in the landscape, irrespective of the season of the year. Flowers and birds were to him the choicest of companionship. I never knew a man who so appreciated the fellowship of inanimate objects. My first visit to his apartments, now some years ago, to see the collection of beautiful pictures which adorned their walls, revealed this remarkable trait of character. One felt that he had a real affection for these silent friends,

who were a joy to him in days of health, and in times of weariness and sickness a solace somewhat akin to that which the early verdure of spring brings to the invalid. Mr. French was a diligent student of art, and while, perhaps, unskilled in its technique, yet he had an accurate knowledge of the laws of perspective, and an eye critical as to color and costume, and so rapid in seizing the details of a picture that a fault or blemish rarely escaped him. His taste in art was unique. As he loved the soothing influences in nature, so too, he liked best in art that of which it is but the counterfeit presentiment. Pictures of peasant life and of pastoral scenes were very attractive to him. His nature was too tender, too responsive to the appeals of sorrow and of pain, to take much pleasure in the delineations of their kindred emotions on the canvas. He loved that which was in harmony with his own heart.

While it is comparatively easy to distinguish the artistic canon which governed Mr. French's taste in the selection of pictures for his own enjoyment, it is more difficult to convey in a brief space an estimate of his attainments in general literature. The more intimately one knew him, the more deeply was one impressed by the extent of his acquisitions as a literary scholar. Among all the chiefs of governmental bureaus with whom I have been acquainted, I regarded Mr. French as not only their peer in intellectual power, but their superior in general culture and in the appreciation of the services of scholarly men in the civil departments of the country. He had no sympathy with that narrow spirit, now so rife at the National Capital, which underrates scholarship in official station, and which the ignorant, to cover up their own deficiencies, are so eager to censure as an element which renders its possessors unpractical civil servants. It has been said, by one who knew him well, that Mr. French was not an ambitious man, and the truth of the remark is equally applicable to his social as well as to his public life. He simply looked upon himself as a man fitted

to do his work, and it was his chief ambition to do that work well, and to be in all things that appertained to it the exemplar of those essential qualities to which all may reach who enter any sphere of public duty. To this exacting service he brought a well-trained mind, which spared neither time nor energy in the discharge of its manifold requirements. The prime quality in his nature was his simplicity. Nothing could destroy or corrupt it. No expensive pleasures tempted him. His pride was not in any form of luxury and his dignity depended not upon artificial adjuncts. The display and the lesser vanities of fashionable society were to him matters of absolute indifference. Even in the cultured circles of the National Capital, in which he was for many years a leading spirit, the absence of pedantry and pomp was apparent in all that he did, and in all that he said. Holding tenaciously to the literary judgments which he had formed of books and of authors, and fortifying the grounds upon which he had reached his conclusions, his modesty, in the defence of his opinions, was as charming as it is rare among literary men. This simplicity of character, so at war with pretence and affectation of all kinds, was supported by a reserve mental force which, when occasion called it forth, was a surprise to those whose acquaintance with Mr. French had been slight. The aim of his life in its moral and intellectual entirety was *to be* rather than *to seem*—  
 Οὐ γὰρ δοκεῖν ἄριστος ἀλλ' εἶναι θέλει. In literature, as in art, he had his decided preferences, and the poets who took nature as their teacher and disfranchised poetry from the stilted mannerism of the royal court and the fashionable drawing-room were his favorites. Wordsworth acknowledges that he gained from Burns that insight into homely truths which has given to his verse such an exquisite flavor of country rather than of town life, but it was Cowper who first led the muse of English poetry to eschew the brick and mortar of the metropolis and make her haunts amid the sylvan scenes of old England. Of this

school of poetry, so redolent of field and of forest, of moor and of down, Mr. French was an ardent lover, and to him Burns was its best representative and exponent. In fact, everything Scotch was specially dear to him. This first awakening interest in Scotland, her people, her literature, and even her national airs, began in early boyhood, when he read and re-read the Waverly novels with a fascination which time never wholly obliterated. Well do I remember the pleasure with which he would refer to the enthusiasm of those boyish days, and the first serious apprehension I had in regard to his health arose from the fact that a discussion on Scotch themes at the Classical Club in the winter of 1878 failed to evoke some words from him. Indeed, I had noticed during this winter that he was less inclined to take part in these literary coteries than usual, and no subject, however full of interest to him, seemed sufficiently attractive to arouse him beyond that of a patient listener. The spring of his life was broken, and in its stead were sown the seeds of decay. In marked contrast with this spirit of repose, which had taken possession of him during the last season in which he appeared among his old friends in the clubs of the Capital, do I recall the almost boyish delight with which he applauded the Scotch songs rendered by a Highland friend in Highland costume.\* And when the festivities of the evening were nearly ended, he requested that same friend for Allister McAllister as a fitting close, and with what zest he enjoyed the drone of the bagpipe as given in this representation of the Highland piper! It would be impossible, in the short space allotted to me, to present the literary features of Mr. French's character in the fulness which they deserve, and I have only touched upon those salient points toward which the lines of a pronounced individuality blended. In the wide range of English letters he was quite at home, and there are few authors in its annals about whom he could not talk

---

\* \* I refer to my esteemed Scotch friend, Mr. Josiah McLeod, than whom no one more truly appreciated the character of the late Mr. French.

familiarly and intelligently. He had a fund of anecdote at his command connected with authorship and public men which enhanced the charm of his conversation, and made him a welcome guest in every literary circle.

At the Schillerbund, under the excellent management of Professor Berkau, at the Reunions of his life-long friend, the Hon. Horatio King, at Professor and Mrs. Siddons' delightful evenings with Shakespeare, at the Unity, the Classical, and the Art Clubs, Mr. French was a constant and well-known visitor, and his presence and zeal were potential factors in giving scope and direction to these various societies for the cultivation of intellectual pursuits.

Although Mr. French's nature was essentially an intellectual one, yet he escaped the chief faults, the outcome in many lives, in which the purely intellectual predominates. He retained a sensitiveness of disposition through an incessantly active career which brought him in contact with all classes of society, and which enabled him to become an exact and ready interpreter of human character. But his sensitiveness was of an extraordinary kind, for instead of finding within himself the object of its operations, it went forth in sorrow or in mortification for others, who were devoid of any keen sense of honor or of shame. It pained him to think ill of any one, and this virtue of looking at the best in men assumed sometimes almost the gravity of a fault:

"And yet the light that led astray  
Was light from heaven."

Mr. French often closed his eyes and deliberately refused to see the meanness in the world around him. Only a pure and noble soul can reach such an altitude in the ethical plane, and it not infrequently brought him severe trial and exposed him to the wiles of the crafty and the self-seeker. All positive men, whose opinions are of any value, awaken opposition and enmity. To say of a citizen of our age and country, whether

in public or in private station, that he has no enemies, is simply to describe a nerveless, pointless character, in whom there is little mental or moral force. The rectitude of Mr. French's life did not save him from the venom of the detractor, but the shafts which were hurled fell utterly impotent in their destructive mission. It ought to be recorded, that those who attempted to tarnish his honorable fame were men irritated by their failure to use him for their own selfish purposes.

Out of this sensitiveness proceeded that kindred quality—a wise and enlightened toleration for the opinions of others in all departments of thought. There is no boast of our age which is more vehement and pretentious than that of toleration, and there is no more common fault in the civil and social life of to-day than the converse of this assumed liberality of thought and of action. Even in the annals of literature there are only a few great writers who possess the true spirit of tolerance. Indeed, the major part of mankind is exasperated at individualities in others, and such intolerance, if inactive, is yet seen in its passive form—a lack of power to comprehend, and consequently a lack of sympathy in any point of view other than its own. Men frequently claim to be misunderstood; but how confident are they in their ability to understand others, and how loath are they to recognize either mental or moral superiority outside of themselves. In every avenue of life, vanity, egotism, and pretence sow the seeds of discontent and rivalry, which in their turn dwarf all true manliness among men. The clear vision to perceive men and affairs as they are, has become so distorted by interest or by prejudice that the virtue of toleration like the virtue of chastity is a rare quality in the ethical make-up of men, especially in men who have grown dogmatic by long service in official station. Instead of a kindly tolerance for the views and opinions of others, the public servants of the Government are more prone to an exercise of, what Shakespeare so felicitously

calls, the insolence of office. It would be difficult to find a more attractive picture of the relation existing between friends, wholly unlike in their views of the great questions which engage the thought of men, than *that* which Mr. French sustained towards his intimates. With a heart so kindly, and a sympathy so comprehensive, he gained and retained the friendship of men of all creeds and of all parties. No words of mine can better speak the toleration he manifested towards all than by noting the fact that Catholic, Protestant, and Rationalist alike were numbered among his closest friends. So considerate was he of the feelings of others that I would hazard the opinion that he never wounded the religious susceptibilities of any one. Of Mr. French's views of the problems which agitate Christendom, at the present day, it is not my province to speak at any length. On questions of this nature there was a wide gulf between us, over which neither of us could pass, and when we did talk on these themes I fancy that each felt as the outposts of the two opposing armies in the late war during a truce. After a certain period in our acquaintance such subjects ceased, as by tacit consent, to enter into our conversation. I am inclined to believe that Mr. French's mind, being of a literary rather than of a speculative cast, shrank from an examination of these problems which with him seemed to lie within the realm of metaphysics. Hence the right of free thought, or the claims of authority in matters of religion, never awakened more than a passing interest in him, and I doubt if he ever considered very narrowly the logical side of his own belief in the Divine order of the world.

It always seemed to me that he clung to the old moorings of the religious faith in which the anchor of his early belief was cast, rather than try the uncertain depths beyond, in which perhaps all the best interests of his life might have been wrecked. He accepted, in the maturity of his years, the teaching gained in childhood, eliminating from it, however, all its

rigidity, and it was his support and solace amid the deepening shadows of declining days. He filled up to the fullest measure the last of the three golden postulates attributed to St. Augustine—"in omnibus caritas"\*—and it is upon this side of his character, the efflorescence, so to speak, of his high moral worth as a man, that his friends now most delight to dwell in recalling memories and scenes forever associated with his name. We, who honor him in death as in life, can say with the Thane of Scotland, in Macbeth, that our

"Cause of sorrow  
Must not be measur'd by his worth, for then  
It hath no end."

It would be beyond the scope of these few pages to enter into any review of the political principles to which Mr. French was attached, and even if space permitted, I should be disinclined, amid the perturbations of the times, to awaken any partisan thought in connection with him, who has passed into the serenity of that cloudless life, wherein dwells eternal peace for all who receive the approval of the Divine Beneficence:

"Peace is God's direct assurance  
To the souls that win release  
From this world of hard endurance—  
Peace, He tells us, only Peace.

"To this life's inquiring traveller,  
Peace of knowledge of all good;  
To the anxious truth-unraveller,  
Peace of wisdom understood.

"To the lover, full fruition  
Of an unexhausted joy;  
To the warrior, crowned ambition  
With no envy's base alloy.

"To the ruler, sense of action,  
Working out his great intent—  
To the Prophet, satisfaction  
In the mission he was sent."†

\* "In necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus caritas."

† Palm Leaves, by Lord Houghton.



## FUNERAL CEREMONIES.

---

The obsequies of the Hon. EZRA BARTLETT FRENCH took place at the Congregational Church, at the corner of Tenth and G streets, northwest, at 3 P. M., on Sunday, April 25, 1880. Mr. French was, at his death, the President of the Society of this Church, and the edifice was crowded, not only with those who had been accustomed to see him among the worshippers, and a large throng of others who came to do honor to a deserving citizen, but by the members of the clerical force lately under his charge. Among these were observed many who had long severed their connection with the office, but whose regard for Mr. French had suffered no diminution from that circumstance.

After the usual opening exercises of prayer and anthem, followed by a touching solo, "Beyond the Smiling and the Weeping," executed by Miss Minnie Ewan, the pastor, Rev. J. E. Rankin, D. D., pronounced the following eulogy: after which, while the solemn tones of the great organ uttered an impressive dirge, under the hands of Professor Bischoff, the hundreds present pressed forward to take a last look at the remains, which lay in state before the pulpit.

The body was then borne to the hearse by the chosen bearers, heads of divisions in the office of the Second Auditor—A. F. Wight, Thomas R. Rathbone, H. A. Whallon, T. C. Bailey, Joseph Barton, and F. H. Morgan. These were followed by the honorary pall-bearers on the part of the Treasury Department, as follows: Assistant Secretaries of the Treasury H. F. French and J. K. Upton; A. G. Porter, First Comptroller; W. W. Upton, Second Comptroller; Colonel O. H. Irish, Chief of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing; R. M. Reynolds, First Auditor; J. M. McGrew, Sixth Auditor, and Hon. Horatio King, ex-Postmaster General, a life-long friend of Mr. French.

The procession then, under escort of the clerical force and of numerous friends of the deceased, proceeded to the Baltimore and Potomac Depot, where the remains were transferred to the train that was to take them to Maine.



## SERMON.

---

### A PRINCE, AND A GREAT MAN.

2 Sam., III, 38. "And the king said to his servants, Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen, this day, in Israel?"

---

The public men of a nation like ours—if they are true, and noble, and good—are the richest heritage we have. It is our sacred duty to honor them, living; and to revere their memory when dead. Princely qualities, qualities of greatness, intellectual and moral, no man who knew him, would deny to EZRA BARTLETT FRENCH. "What your heart thinks greatness is great. The soul's emphasis is always right." These words of Ralph Waldo Emerson were beautifully illustrated in him. Simple, ingenuous, open-hearted, accessible as a child; free from jealousy, free from the spirit of competition or rivalry; contented to be what his Maker made him, and to let his Master make him room; enjoying life in all its innocent features; in the little flower, in the sweet song of the pet bird, in the beauties of nature and of art; appreciative of man, reverent towards God; tender and true toward those nearest his great heart; loyal to man's noblest aspirations and instincts—every true heart received him as a kind of natural prince, for whom it was glad to make room; received him, and crowned him with many crowns.

There are men who seem belittled by their very elevation. They seem the more diminutive the more you bring their inferior gifts and powers into contrast with high place, with great responsibilities. They are like a poor insect in the focus of a solar microscope. You see how commonplace their every

member is. Other men seem to expand and broaden out to meet the demands of every new elevation. They fill every place they occupy full. And if there is a *higher* place, or a *highest* place, you say to yourself: "What proportions this man might display were he only there!"

A great deal is said, in our day, about the *degeneracy* of our public men. Degeneracy means the falling away from a high standard. The public life of Mr. French may challenge the closest scrutiny—may challenge comparison with the highest standards. If there was disinterested patriotism; if there was unflinching fidelity to public trusts in the first period of this Republic; if you can select from the circle of Washington and his compeers men, the princely proportions of whose character seem like the pillars of some great temple, hewn out of the purest marble, and crowned with the most graceful capital; such a man, I believe, entitled to be found in such society, I believe was EZRA BARTLETT FRENCH.

The two poles of Mr. French's great nature were tenderness and inflexibility; mercy and justice. Around these two poles his being revolved. Between these two poles, if I may so speak, lay all the pleasing varieties of climate and production; all the different zones of beauty; of mental and moral phenomena which his daily life displayed. In his sympathy for the weak, the suffering, the wronged, he was as easily wrought upon, as tearful as a woman. In his intention to mete out strict justice, to carry out to the letter the statute, which, as an executive officer of the Government, was his guide, he was as inflexible as though made of iron. These were his Arctic regions. It mattered not who you were; it mattered not what your plea; the case was closed against all argument. Justice had bandaged her eyes; she was deaf, she was dumb; she had even drawn her sword, and was ready to strike. That right hand would freely minister from his own substance to give you temporary relief; but it should forget its

cunning, it should hang palsied at his side, before it should ever be set with approval to that which was not just and due; to that which the law gave him no right to grant.

Sir Robert Walpole has said that *every man has his price*. Who ever found *this man's* price? Let him answer here, in the presence of his sacred dust. What, in his official capacity, has this man ever done which will not bear the light of day? What thought has he ever had, what whisper has he ever breathed, that could not be published upon the house-top? What seemed to him *right* this man would do, whoever threatened, whatever hindered. What seemed to him *wrong*—to look it with the eye, to utter it in his ear, was an insult to his nature. His whole being recoiled from it. His reply had in it all the mingled scorn and horror of the words, "Get thee behind me, Satan!"

Called to the position of Second Auditor of the Treasury of the United States by Abraham Lincoln himself; that he should have held it during nineteen long years; years so eventful and laborious; having paid out more than nineteen hundred millions of dollars; and yet leave, to-day, a name as spotless and a reputation as untarnished as when he entered it; nay, a name and a reputation brightened in lustre with each succeeding year of public service; and this in a period when it has sometimes seemed as though the *people* even desired to see the one popular idol after another topple over in disgrace, and when the men of the press have seemed determined to prove Walpole's maxim to be true, and to *find out* every man's price. What better record could a man have than this? A public man champions a measure, a great general fights a battle, and henceforth his name is famous. This man has stood the champion of integrity, has fought the battles of justice, for nineteen long years. We but wrap him in the snow-white colors he has borne.

Madame de Remusat assures us, in her memoirs, that Napoleon

the First selected all the methods of his government from those which have a tendency to *debase* men; that he put his own imprint of selfishness and meanness upon all beneath him. A base man will always do this. A corrupt man will always corrupt his inferiors. The difference in any government, or department, or bureau, or office of government, between an executive whose ends are noble and whose methods are direct; who knows what he is about, and who cannot be tampered with; who asks nothing of those under him but that they be *men*, men after his own order, faithful and true; and an official of the *opposite* character is almost world-wide. One is a school of *honor*; the other is a school of *infamy*. Mr. French was a man, all of whose associates, assistants, and subordinates, would feel the influence of his own noble nature. To serve him as he wanted to be served enobled them.

Mr. French was not an ambitious man. If he had been, what prize might he not have grasped? Whenever a great matter was at stake, whether in the courts or the legislative bodies of his adopted State, or on the floor of Congress, he had at command such resources of courage, of intellect, of will; such reserves, seldom called into the field, as showed that, whatever the emergency, he was sufficient for it. But he had a large contentment with what he had. He had none of that consuming passion for public advancement, which has embittered the latter days of so many of our greatest minds. But those who knew him best believe that there was no place in the gift of the people which he would not have adorned; and to which he might not have rightfully aspired. Though it may well be questioned whether he could have served his country in any capacity, more to her advantage, than in the stupendous work which he actually accomplished.

Mr. French was eminently friendly and social. He knew nothing of a profane common people. To him *man* was *man*, and every man was sacred. He was a large reader,

especially of English literature; had stored his great memory with choice bits of anecdote; knew men and events; and there was no place in the world where a friend was surer of a warm greeting and genial entertainment than in his modest apartments, in presence of the devoted woman who loved him so well, and surrounded by a very gallery of select paintings, such as only his refined taste could bring together.

Never was he more eloquent than when the theme was his favorite poet, Robert Burns, whom he seemed to regard as an old-time crony, whom "he lo'ed as a vera brither." Whether because of the reckless manner in which Burns handled some of the theological bugbears and inconsistencies of his own boyhood days, or whether because of the poet's ringing words in behalf of human freedom and rights, or whether because of the wit and pathos and power of the poet himself; there was no end to his praise of the Scottish bard. The sociability of Mr. French's nature made him a welcome guest at all the literary and other social gatherings in which Washington so much abounds. Appreciative himself, always ready to lend a helping hand, never coming as a critic, enjoying everything, contributing to everything, wherever he went he was wanted again. This peculiarity of Mr. French's great nature reminds us of the tribute of Robert Burns to another, a tribute which no one ever deserved better than Mr. French:

"Go to your sculptured tombs, ye great  
In a' the tinsel trash of state!  
But by thy honest turf I'll wait,  
Thou man of worth,  
And weep the ae best fellow's fate,  
E'er laid in earth!"

In feature, port, and presence, Mr. French was one of the most remarkable men you would see in a lifetime. With a high forehead, arching backward, a full, broad, shapely brow, an eye responsive to any and every emotion, laughing with light or burning with indignation; an aquiline nose; a clear-cut, determined mouth; a laugh which had the melody of a

great bell; with a stately, well proportioned figure, in which greatness and dignity and ease and strength were all combined; there was something magnificent in his whole physical conformation. Spectators felt like thanking the Creator for giving such a man such an outward framework. I have spoken of him as deserving to be classed with such men as Washington, because of his severe and straightforward integrity. He has often been compared to Washington, in his outward appearance; and there was nothing in the man which made you feel that the comparison suggested unpleasant differences. You could not look upon him without remembering the words of Shakespeare,

“A combination and a form, indeed,  
Where every god did seem to set his seal,  
To give the world assurance of a man.”

He was such a man as you liked to look up to; beneath whose fatherly shadow you liked to hide yourself.

By the ordinary laws of hereditary descent, Mr. French was entitled to a long life. His father, Dr. John French, a man of great vigor of intellect, died a few years since in Beloit, Wisconsin, at the age of seventy-three. The son died a little short of seventy. To his sense of public duty he literally sacrificed his life. He made his country heir of the entail which he inherited from his ancestors. Born in Landaff, New Hampshire, September 23, 1810, he read law in Bath and Haverhill, New Hampshire, practised a short time in Buffalo, New York, and finally settled in Damariscotta, Maine. There he married his wife. There, too, he attained his early successes in his profession; soon came to the front as a lawyer and legislator, and from there, in due time, he was sent to the stormy scenes of the Thirty-sixth Congress, the Congress just preceding the rebellion. Among his more intimate associates were Fessenden and Hamlin, and Henry Wilson; honored names, every one; men with whom he stood shoulder to shoulder in all those days which tried men's souls.



From the first, Mr. French's illness, brought on by the strain put upon him by the extra session of Congress, was of a character to awaken the most serious apprehensions. In Bethlehem, beneath the shadow of the White Mountains, where he had so often found his strength again, the other shadows began to fall. They followed him back to Damariscotta; back again to Washington. They have hovered over him since. They have now deepened into our night; but he has escaped them forever. With him, it is eternal day! When he returned to this city last fall, he said to his pastor: "I have been lying upon my bed these many months, trying to school myself to say, 'Not my will, but thine be done!'" Now, I think I can say it." And yet he never despaired of getting about again. He waited his Master's will.

Mr. French was an independent thinker on the subject of religion; but he was too many-sided a man, he had too many greatnesses, to be a skeptic. Many times during the last few years, with an indescribable mellowness of spirit, has he expressed his sincere conviction of the truth of Christianity; his own personal reliance upon the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, and his sense of Christian fellowship with all true Christians as a brother in the Lord. For the ten years of my ministry here this congregation has furnished no more intelligent, or regular, or appreciative hearer, and no more devoted friend to its pastor, than EZRA BARTLETT FRENCH. There has been no fitter man to be President of this Society. And I wish to put upon record here the good which his kind presence here, and his kind words have always done me. No one will miss him more than his pastor. It was only a few days since that he requested the reading to him, some time, of a recent sermon, on "The Immortality of the Soul;" adding, with a firm confidence, which was actually thrilling, "Not that I need it!" It thrills me again as I recall it. He did not need it. It was already written within him.

Thus he went down into the valley of the shadow of death, fearing no evil; and when God's messenger actually came, he did his work, as when one soothes to sleep a little child. His watchers had only time to say to each other, "Behold!" and he had ceased to breathe. The other day, only Wednesday last, after many months of confinement with a deceptive convalescence, Mr. French was able to ride out, amid the tokens of spring-promise, which greet us on every hand. He saw the trees with their tender green; the sparkling waters of the Potomac, the green banks beyond, and he thought again, no doubt, of his own native hills, and how sweet the air would taste, as he soon nestled for the summer beneath them. It was a dream. It was a prophecy. Earthly things bore the burden of things heavenly. He was never again to breathe New England air. It was of the Hills of God that he dreamed. It was of the greenness of those sweet fields beyond the swelling flood; a flood which God's messenger smote, and it parted; even before he knew it he was on the other side. That eternal springtime has burst upon his being, never to be interrupted, never to be broken. He there learns, at the feet of Jesus, the lessons which we are so slow to apprehend in this life.

What growth into the likeness of the Lord; what expansion and blessedness are before him! Farewell, brother! Sweet fellowship have we had upon this side; God grant us sweeter fellowship beyond!

Yes,

Farewell, brother!

We see the mountain-tops aglow,  
The distant heights we may not know;  
They are denied to us below.

Farewell, brother!

We cannot trace thine upward flight,  
We know, thou'rt gone beyond our sight;  
We know, thou'rt only lost in light!

EZRA BARTLETT FRENCH.

---

BY MRS. A. L. RUTER DUFOUR.

---

*2d Samuel, 3d chap., 38th verse.*

"A prince this day has entered heaven's gate,  
The angel-herald with his trûmp proclaim'd;  
And seraph hosts that waited on the Lord  
Bowed with mute rapture. Every eye flashed bright  
On the approach of him who stateliest walked,  
'Mid his attending glorious embassy.

The man whom his Creator had made prince  
Among his fellow-men, by attributes  
Akin to God's; grand in all thought and act,  
Generous, and worthy of all meed and praise,  
Staunch champion of what is true and right,  
While tender as a woman's his great heart.  
Friend to all science, progress, whate'er tended  
To elevate, enrich, exalt the mind;  
True patron of the highest art, and sought  
With ready hand to compensate, with word  
To cheer, the earnest toiler on his way,  
In search of fortune, fame, and truths divine.

What wonder they who call'd him brother, friend,  
Now sit in sadness by his vacant place;  
And sigh for the dear presence to them lost,  
Yearn, vainly, for the regal form that e'er  
Pre-eminent with grace and virtue stood.  
O bitter sorrow to that widowed heart  
So fondly sheltered, and so tenderly,  
By the true love of one so wise and good.  
We sorrow with thee, sad and lonely one,  
The great and good and loving weep with thee,

And pray that God be your defense and guide.  
Alas, this world is full of sad farewells,  
And bitter partings that do wrench the soul  
Almost from reason's throne. But they who trust,  
Like the few faithful weeping at the cross,  
That the dead Christ would rise some future day,  
Look forward to behold their friend again,  
Where shadows of sad parting or of death  
The radiance of his home can never mar.

Rest, noble friend; sublime and calm thy rest  
After thy life of duties so well done.  
May thy example lead us to that realm  
Where Love immortal rules, for God is love.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *April 27, 1880.*









WERT  
BOOKBINDING  
Grantville, Pa  
Jan - Feb 1989  
We're Quality Bound



